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ED 010 901 EA 000 056

A COMPARISON OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH CONCOMITANT IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.

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EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.72 18P.

DESCRIPTORS- ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, *SCHOOL SEGREGATION, *PRINCIPALS, COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, FACULTY, ADMINSTRATOR ROLE, *ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, PERCEPTION, HALPIN AND CROFT'S ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

FACULTY PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN A PREDOMINATELY SEGREGATED SCHOOL SYSTEM WAS DETERMINED FROM A SAMPLE OF 45 NEGRO AND 66 WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN A SOUTHEASTERN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT. A MODIFIED FORM OF HALPIN AND CROFT'S ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE WAS USED TO GATHER DATA ON EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER PERCEPTION OF FACULTY AND PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR--DISENGAGEMENT, HINDRANCE, ESPRIT, INTIMACY, ALOOFNESS, PRODUCTION EMPHASIS, TRUST, AND CONSIDERATION. SCORES IN THESE AREAS WERE SCALED ON A CONTINUUM OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE--OPEN, AUTONOMOUS, CONTROLLED, FAMILIAR, PATERNAL, AND CLOSED. FINDINGS INDICATED BOTH NEGRO AND WHITE FACULTIES TENDED TO VIEW THEIR SCHOOLS AS PATERNALISTIC, BUT THAT NEGRO FACULTIES VIEWED THEIR SCHOOLS AS MORE CLOSED THAN WHITE FACULTIES DID. THE STUDY INCLUDED A SUMMARY OF ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF NEGRO AND WHITE PRINCIPALS, WITH EVIDENCE THAT PRINCIPALS OF WHITE SCHOOLS HAVE MORE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED ROLE-CONFLICTS BETWEEN THEIR FACULTY AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE THESE POSITIONS ARE LESS WIDELY SEPARATED FOR THEM THAN FOR NEGRO PRINCIPALS. (JK)

ED010901

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A. Background

During the past twenty years the attention of the nation has been increasingly directed toward those public schools enrolling only Negro children. This has been particularly true of Negro schools located in the South. These schools have been indicted for the low achievement of their graduates, for being primarily vocational in purpose, for being poorly staffed, for having low financial support and, in general, for being inferior to segregated white schools. Although considerable research has been directed toward the students and staffs of Negro schools, few empirical studies have been conducted in an attempt to isolate how these schools are organized and operated. Many questions arise which would seem pertinent. For example: Are white schools administered in a more democratic manner than Negro schools? Is there higher morale among faculty members of white schools than among faculty members of Negro schools? Do Negro and white faculty members differ in their perceptions of the schools in which they are employed? Answers to these questions are certainly pertinent to those public school officials presently attempting to define the role of teachers and administrators in recently integrated schools.

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This study sought to examine faculty perception of the "climate" of both Negro and white elementary schools in an urban school system of a southern state. The instrument used was the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire developed by Halpin and Croft (4). Halpin and Croft sought to identify and describe the dimensions of organizational climate in elementary schools through an analysis of social interaction within the school organization. They developed the instrument known as the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, which identifies eight dimensions of organizational behavior and six types of organizational climate. Four of the dimensions (Disengagement, Hindrance, Esprit, and Intimacy) measure a faculty's perception of interaction as related to the faculty group, while the other four dimensions (Aloofness, Production Emphasis, Thrust, and Consideration) are measures of teacher perception of the principal's behavior.

The eight dimensions of organizational behavior slightly modified by the present authors, were defined by Halpin and Croft (4) as follows:

1. Disengagement refers to the teachers' tendency to be "not with it." This dimension describes a group that is "going through the motions," a group that is "not in gear" with respect to the task at hand.

2. Hindrance refers to the teachers' feeling that the principal burdens them with routine duties, committee demands, and other requirements which the teachers construe as unnecessary busy work. The teachers perceive the principal as hindering rather than facilitating their work.

3. Esprit refers to "morale." The teachers feel that their social needs are being satisfied, and that they are, at the same time, enjoying a sense of accomplishment in their job.

4. Intimacy refers to the teachers' enjoyment of friendly social relations with each other. This dimension describes a social-needs satisfaction which is not necessarily associated with task accomplishment.

5. Aloofness refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized as formal and impersonal. He "goes by the book" and prefers to be guided by rules and policies rather than to deal with the teachers in an informal, face-to-face situation. His behavior, in brief, is universalistic rather than particularistic; nomothetic rather than idiosyncratic. To maintain this style, he keeps himself--at least, "emotionally" --at a distance from his staff.

6. Production emphasis refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by close supervision of the staff. He is highly directive, and plays the role of a "straw boss." His communication tends to go in only one direction, and he is not sensitive to feedback from the staff.

7. Thrust refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by his evident effort in trying to "move the organization." "Thrust" behavior is marked not by close supervision but by the principal's attempt to motivate the teachers through the example which he personally sets.

8. Consideration refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by an inclination to treat the teachers "humanly," to try to do a little something extra for them in human terms.

Scores on the eight dimensions are patterned to form six types of organizational climate. Ranged along a continuum they are: (1) Open, (2) Autonomous, (3) Controlled, (4) Familiar, (5) Paternal, and (6) Closed. Each climate type is defined below (5).

1. The Open Climate describes an energetic, lively organization which is moving toward its goals, and which provides satisfaction for the group members' social needs. Leadership acts emerge easily and appropriately from both the group and the leader. The members are preoccupied disproportionately with neither task achievement nor social-needs satisfaction; satisfaction on both counts seem to be obtained easily and almost

effortlessly. The main characteristic of this climate is the "authenticity" of the behavior that occurs among all members.

2. The Autonomous Climate is described as one in which leadership acts emerge primarily from the group. The leader exerts little control over the group members; high esprit results primarily from social-needs satisfaction. Satisfaction from task-achievement is also present, but to a lesser degree.

3. The Controlled Climate is characterized best as impersonal and highly task-oriented. The group's behavior is directed toward task-accomplishment, while relatively little attention is given to behavior oriented to social-needs satisfaction. Esprit is fairly high, but it reflects achievement at some expense to social-needs satisfaction. This climate lacks openness, or "authenticity" of behavior, because the group is disproportionately preoccupied with task achievement.

4. The Familiar Climate is highly personal, but uncontrolled. The members of this organization satisfy their social needs, but pay relatively little attention to social control in respect to task accomplishment. Accordingly, esprit is not extremely high simply because the group members secure little satisfaction from task achievement. Hence, much of the behavior within this climate can be construed as "inauthentic."

5. The Paternal Climate is characterized best as one in which the principal constrains the emergence of leadership acts from the group and attempts to initiate most of the acts himself. The leadership skills within the group are not used to supplement the principal's own ability to initiate leadership acts. Accordingly, some leadership acts are not even attempted. In short, little satisfaction is obtained in respect to either achievement or social needs; hence, esprit among the members is low.

6. The Closed Climate is characterized by a high degree of apathy on the part of all members of the organization. The organization is not "moving;" Esprit is low because the group members secure neither social-needs satisfaction nor the satisfaction that comes from task achievement. The members' behavior can be construed as "inauthentic;" indeed, the organization seems to be stagnant.

B. Purpose and Setting

The purpose of this study was to answer two questions: (1) Do the faculties of Negro and white elementary schools in a predominantly segregated school system perceive the organizational climate of their schools differently? and (2) If the faculties of Negro and white elementary schools perceive the organizational climates of the schools differently, then where does this difference lie?

The population of the study included all elementary school teachers in an urban school district located in a southeastern state. The student enrollment in the school district was rather evenly divided between members of the two races. While the school system had complied with a court order to begin integrating Negro and white students, there had been no integration of teaching staffs at the time the study was conducted.

The school system enjoys the prestige of being one of the best in the state. The salary scale is one of the highest in the state and is comparable to those in cities of equal size throughout the Nation. The community in which the school system is located, has a history of rather good relations between the races. Negroes serve on the school board and other governmental bodies within the community.

C. Method

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire was administered to the faculties of all elementary

schools in the system during the last quarter of the school year 1964. All questionnaires were completed on the same day. The principal of each school, who had received detailed instruction as to how the instrument was to be administered, accepted responsibility for seeing that each teacher in his school completed the questionnaire. The instruments were then returned to the central office, where they were collected by the investigators. Complete responses were returned from 111 of 114 elementary schools.

To insure anonymity of the participants no names were required on the questionnaires. After the instruments were completed by faculty members they were sealed in a specially prepared envelope by the principal, in the presence of the faculty, and placed in the intra-system delivery system.

The questionnaires were computer scored using a program provided by the originators of the instrument.

While all of the data from the study have not been fully analyzed the analyses to date have indicated certain rather positive conclusions. These are: (A) the findings of Halpin and Croft that the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire does in fact identify the prevailing organizational climate in the elementary school and it does discriminate at the level of the individual teacher within a school relative to his perception of the climate of that school. (B) A factor analysis of the data from this study revealed a three-factor pattern for the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire which was almost identical to the patterns obtained by Halpin and Croft in their original

study. Thus, a homogeneous sample from a single urban school system yielded almost identical factor patterns as did a heterogeneous sample drawn from schools in several states throughout the nation. (C) Item reliabilities proved to be somewhat higher in the majority of instances than those reported by the originators of the instrument.

A chi-square analysis was then performed to compare the distribution of climate types in each of two types of schools. A test of significance, using student's "t," was employed to identify significant differences between means on the climate dimensions for the schools falling under each climate type.

D. Results

The faculties of Negro and white elementary schools perceived the organizational climate of the school differently in some instances, yet in others they perceived them similarly. (Table 1). While 40 per cent of the Negro schools were perceived by their faculties as being Closed, only 6.06 per cent of the white schools were seen in this manner by their faculties. Approximately 41 per cent of the white faculties saw their school as having an Open climate, as compared with 13.33 per cent of the Negro faculties. Thus, in one comparison Negro schools were quantitatively described as tending toward the Closed end of the continuum, while white schools were more often seen as Open.

On the other hand, 29 per cent of the Negro faculties and 32 per cent of white faculties perceived their school as

having a Paternalistic climate (Table I). Therefore, when considering all schools, irrespective of race, Paternalism becomes the most frequently selected climate type (30.63 per cent) followed closely by the Open climate (29.72 per cent) and then by Closed climate (19.81 per cent).

A comparison of means of each of the climate dimensions for Negro and white schools by climate type was computed (Table 2). It should be recalled that the dimension patterns form six climates. For example, an Open climate is characterized by high Esprit, Thrust and Consideration and low Disengagement, Hindrance and Production Emphasis. It was noted that significant differences between the two groups occurred only at the extremes of the climate continuum. In schools classified as "Open" by faculties of both races, Negro faculties perceived themselves as being significantly lower on Esprit and significantly higher on Disengagement and Production Emphasis than did faculties of predominantly white schools. On the other hand, in schools with Closed climates, the white faculties perceived the principal as being significantly more considerate than did Negro faculties. The chi-square value for this comparison was 28.26, significantly different at the .01 level.

E. Conclusions and Discussion

The results of the study provide evidence on which answers to the two questions posed may be based. First, Negro and white elementary school faculties in a predominately segregated school system, while in agreement as to

the Paternal climate existing in many schools of both races, generally view the organizational climate of their schools differently. Second, Negro faculties tend to view their schools as falling on the Closed end of the climate continuum (Paternalistic or Closed), while white teachers saw their school as having essentially a bi-polar distribution on the climate continuum (Open or Paternalistic).

When the analysis was made in terms of dimension scores, the two groups showed significant differences in perception only at the extremes of the climate continuum. It was apparent that Negro faculties saw the faculty group as having rather low morale and as being highly disengaged from their tasks. At the same time they view the principal as emphasizing production, with modest consideration for the faculty. On the other hand, white faculties tend to have higher morale within the faculty group and to view the principal as hard working and considerate. Leadership in the Negro faculties is apparently centered in the principal, while in white faculties it could arise both from the faculty group and the principal.

The fact that a relatively high percentage of both white and Negro teachers saw their schools as Paternalistic was of considerable interest. This may be a feature common to the southeastern region. In their original study in which the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire was developed, Halpin and Croft (4) reported that 6 out of 10 schools in another state from this region could be classified as Paternalistic. Although the two studies do not offer sufficient data on which to report absolute conclusions, they most certainly

indicate a point of departure for executive judgment. In view of the past history of paternalism in society and government within the Southeastern region, it would seem not unreasonable to expect that many public schools would reflect a Paternalistic climate resulting from paternalistic leadership.

The question may be raised as to why Negro teachers tend to perceive their schools as Closed, while white teachers tend to perceive a substantial number of their schools as Open. There are many factors, such as needs-satisfaction, values, and cultural background, which affect perception (1). Undoubtedly these factors, and many others, were operative to a greater or lesser degree in this particular instance. The reporters advance, as a point of conjecture, that one of the more tenable explanations of the findings of this study lies in the role of the principal in the school and community.

Some authorities (2) (3) believe that the principal is the key figure within a school organization. His approach to making decisions, controlling students, developing public relations, working with the faculty, etc., decidedly influence the interactions that occur within the faculty group, the relationship between the school and the central administration, and the relationship between the school and the community. Because of this influence, the principal occupies a sometimes anxious, pressure-ridden, and conflict-prone position. Subject to the wishes, expectations and pressures of his faculty on one hand, and those of the superintendent, school board and community on the other, the principal regardless of his race, can truly be characterized as the "man-in-the-middle." Caught in-the-middle,

the principal must find some way to resolve the conflicts and pressures which beset him from both sides. In this respect, the Negro principal probably finds himself in a more untenable position than the principal of a white school, because he must mediate between two positions which are more widely separated than those faced by the white principal. In addition, the Negro principal usually occupies a higher status position within his school community than does his white counterpart. This circumstance increases the pressure on the Negro principal because he is often placed in a position of representing the wishes of the community, as well as the school faculty, in dealing with the superintendent and board of education.

Faced with the pressures of his job, and the conflict of representing two often divergent points of view, the principal must take some action to resolve his dilemma. What alternatives, then, are open to him? Halpin and Winer (6), in a study involving a military organization suggested that the man-in-the-middle may take several courses of action: (a) he can identify completely with his superiors and the formal organization and disparage the need to be considerate of his subordinates, (b) he can reduce intimacy with his men to minimize guilt feelings about being inconsiderate of them, (c) he can be inconsiderate "on the job" but very considerate of the men off the job, and (d) he can identify completely with his men. If a leader fully accepted any of these positions, he probably would be ineffective due to a failure to fully serve either his superiors or his subordinates. An effective leader, on the other hand, would be able to achieve balance in his

behavior so that his superior and his subordinates will not view him as being "the man" of the other group.

Following this line of thinking, the data and discussion here-to-fore presented would seem to indicate that white principals have achieved a degree of balance in their operation. Morale in their schools is generally high, the teachers view the principal as considerate, and there seems to be a reasonable balance between Production Emphasis and Thrust. In other words, the organization apparently meets the twin needs of the faculty group, e.g., social satisfaction and task accomplishment. Conversely, the Negro principal appears to have become more oriented to his superiors with a corresponding lessening of concern for his subordinates. While working hard himself and emphasizing production, there apparently is low task accomplishment due to low morale and high disengagement on the part of the faculty.

It may well be that two dimensions of social behavior in the school, the nomothetic which emphasizes the role expectations of the institution and the idiographic dimension which emphasizes the need-disposition of the individual within the organization cannot be treated as mutually exclusive elements of administrative consideration, that is, the needs and goals of the group must be placed on the same plane as the needs and goals of the organization proper, neither being subordinate to the other. Only through such integration of the two perception planes can a common goal be obtained.

F. Summary

This study sought to (1) determine if faculties of Negro and white elementary schools in a predominately segregated school system perceived the organizational climate of their schools differently and (2) if they did have different perceptions of their schools, where does this difference lie?

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire developed by Halpin and Croft was used as the data gathering instrument. The sample consisted of 111 elementary schools in an urban school district in a Southeastern state. Forty-five of the sample schools were Negro and 66 were white.

Negro and white faculties differed significantly in their perception of the organizational climate of their schools. A large majority of Negro faculties perceived their schools as either Closed or Paternalistic (as defined by the model heretofore presented), while white faculties saw their schools as Open or Paternalistic.

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TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND RACE

Type of School		Organizational Climates						
		Open	Autonomous	Controlled	Familiar	Paternal	Closed	Total
*Negro	Number	6	0	8	0	13	18	45
	Percentage	13.33	0	17.77	0	28.88	40.00	100.0
*White	Number	27	2	7	5	21	4	66
	Percentage	40.90	3.03	10.60	7.57	31.81	6.06	100.0
All Schools	Number	33	2	15	5	34	22	111
	Percentage	29.72	1.80	13.51	4.50	30.63	19.81	100.0

*Chi-square, Negro--white = 28.26
P <.01

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF DIMENSION MEANS OF NEGRO AND WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BY TYPE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Organizational Climate	Type of School	Number	Disengagement	Hindrance	Esprit	Intimacy	Aloofness	Production Emphasis	Thrust	Consideration
Open										
	Negro	6	44.33	40.00	49.00	44.00	40.33	60.00	58.83	59.33
	White	27	41.52	42.63	58.85	46.15	42.41	48.56	56.37	62.00
		t	2.63*	1.09	2.90**	.82	1.09	4.71**	1.82	1.10
Controlled										
	Negro	8	47.63	49.38	45.25	38.25	49.25	64.50	52.38	49.38
	White	7	42.50	50.63	49.25	38.50	49.75	61.13	51.25	52.75
		t	1.70	.33	.94	.11	.15	1.94	.48	1.08
Paternalistic										
	Negro	13	58.31	47.38	41.54	39.69	44.23	56.46	51.77	56.54
	White	21	54.86	51.14	42.86	42.52	41.90	52.33	49.48	59.95
		t	1.16	1.92	.80	1.93	1.07	1.94	.99	1.85
Closed										
	Negro	18	59.83	51.25	38.39	44.06	54.44	59.89	41.72	47.94
	White	4	61.25	53.78	38.00	44.00	48.75	58.25	40.25	54.00
		t	.54	1.07	.17	.03	1.10	.52	.57	2.41*

*Significant .05
**Significant .01

Note 1: Authoritarian and Familiar Climates are not included. No Negro schools fell into these climate categories.